

Attachment 8:

Foothill CLEAR CIT Focus Group

October 1999

1. What has the Foothill C.I.T. been able to accomplish?

- Awareness of what's going on in the community and with other community members.
- Reduction in crime.
- Knowing who to call – new information on where to go.
- Ability to identify and recognize graffiti – knowing what officers to call.
- Helps monitor and patrol gang members, we are able to get better information (C.I.T. is providing this information).
- Opened the line of communication between the D.A. and the C.A., etc.
- Renewed confidence of people in the community, there is less fear of police and more trust in them.
- Provides a sense of togetherness, better sense of communication.
- Provides a forum for communication.

Participant-Submitted Written Notes:

- It brings the community together.
- Lowers crime, removes graffiti.
- We know who to contact within all the different groups.
- Gang members have been placed on notice that the community will not tolerate their actions.
- Communication between community members and public safety service agencies.
- It educates community members concerning quality of life improvement activities.
- Cooperation between agencies and community members much improved. Better sense of community and feelings of stewardship.

2. What would make the C.I.T. stronger? How could that be done?

- More involvement of more hard working community members.
- Develop specific projects, i.e. construct a notebook of recurring problems.
- Put some systems in place for doing this (the specific projects).
- Educate the community – make sure links remain in place.
- Make sure the churches work along with us – distance between the have and the have-nots will be reduced – educate the congregation.
- Remain effective in getting information to people.

Participant-Submitted Written Notes:

- Get the churches and business leaders involved.
- Participation.
- Train people what to look for.

- More involved community members. More involvement from California Department of Corrections and California Youth Authority Parole.

3. Is the neighborhood better off because of the C.I.T.? Because of CLEAR? How?

- Yes, the fact that crime is moving out of our area and into Norm's is a good example of how.
- Yes, we need to expand and build upon this.
- The neighborhood is quiet.
- The neighborhood is a lot cleaner. There is a lot less graffiti, especially on the main streets like Van Nuys. There is a better perception of our community.
- We have to be careful about getting information, but the community is still safer.
- Yes, we are able to educate others regarding their own quality of life.

Participant-Submitted Written Notes:

- Somewhat better.
- Yes.
- Less crime, less stealing.
- Cleaner.
- Crime is down. Persons (are) being supervised in the community by probation, the court and parole. People are being held accountable for their court-ordered conditions of probation and parole. Gangs are more conscious of being watched and action being taken against them and have taken their activities underground.

4. How can the C.I.T. work better with City Services? With Schools? With other agencies? Are you working with other agencies?

- They give us the paperwork to file. This is new and we get results.
- We can go to the person directly.
- We can go straight to the correct person, there are direct links with people.
- You have seen that here today, instead of going to an office, you can get a number or talk to the person right here.
- We have several contacts, sometimes our contacts will become C.I.T. members.
- We are feeders into the other agencies.

Participant-Submitted Written Notes:

- Better communication to inform people.
- Open communication. It's great for all community services to coordinate efforts.
- There needs to be a firewall between the C.I.T. and the outlaw / anti-social elements of the community for safety reasons. That militates against the C.I.T. getting involved with hands-on community service.

What about agencies focused on prevention? Do you work with these agencies?

- Pacoima Beautiful – pride in the neighborhood.
- Jeopardy.
- Safe Passages.
- Sometimes individuals are involved with a particular group and they bring information back to us.
- Gang Alternative Program.
- Clergy Response Team in Foothill.
- Operation Lead.
- We should be contacting CBO's.

5. How can the C.I.T. survive when the CLEAR program disappears?

- Get sponsorship from businesses in the community.
- Get support from CHAMBERS, Booster Associations.
- Council's Office, Alex Padilla.
- We need to keep people interested, this is a big concern.
- We have to continue the ties regardless of the program, probation officers should stay in police stations.
- Maintain the extra officers.
- We need to maintain the manpower, these officers have always been there, it is now their salary is being paid by the grant. We need to keep those extra officers.
- Maintain the focus and the cooperation, this is effective.
- How could the program disappear? It is an elimination of costs, keep everything centralized, this is cost effective.

Participant-Submitted Written Notes:

- Have a sponsor like a church or community business.
- Community interaction.
- Keep probation officers in the police station. Do not cut the numbers of police officers assigned to gang suppression. Keep the manpower infrastructure in place.